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HOT STOCK TIP? LOVE LETTER FROM YOUR MISTRESS? PUBLISHER'S CLEARING HOUSE SWEEPSTAKES WINNER?
IT'S NOTHING, LOIS.
WE'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT IT. TRUST ME.
BETTER OFF WITHOUT WHAT? WHY ARE YOU BEING SO MYSTERIOUS, CLARK? WHO ARE YOU, BATMAN?
CLARK...?
MY HUSBAND'S STRONGER THAN A LOCOMOTIVE BUT AFRAID OF A LITTLE MAIL?
THIS I'VE GOTTA SEE...
"DEAR CLARK..."

On behalf of Smallville Township's Academic Board of Directors and the entire student body of Smallville High --
-- and as your former football coach --
-- it is my great pleasure to extend to you this invitation to be Master of Ceremonies at this year's HOMECOMING DANCE.
STAR
As one of our school's most illustrious graduates, we would consider it an honor if you could find time in your no doubt busy schedule to join us for this special event.
Sincerest regards, Coach Walt Andrews.
Go CAW-CAW-CAW Crows!

CHESS, CLARK? WITH PLASTIC MAN?!
YOU'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET OUT OF GOING TO THIS DANCE.
WAIT, HOW DID YOU --?
HE CALLED. FROM THE MOON. COLLECT.

HONEY, YOU KNOW YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING, RIGHT?
OF COURSE.
THEN SPILL IT, MISTER. I'M YOUR WIFE. IF SOMETHING'S ON YOUR MIND, I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT IT IS.

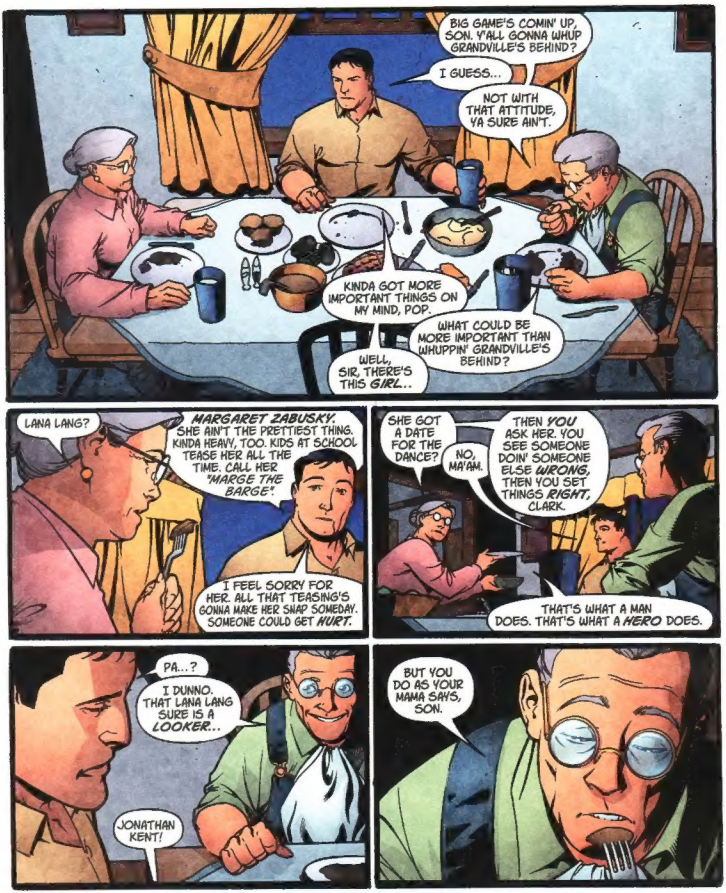
PLEASE, LOIS. I'D REALLY RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT THIS RIGHT NOW.
APPARENTLY.
IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT'S BEST LEFT BURIED IN THE PAST.
LIKE CHEESY POWDER-BLUE POLYESTER TUXEDOS AND WHITE PATENT LEATHER SHOES?
EXACTLY.

YOU ARE SO MINE DURING THE SPOTLIGHT DANCE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GOT HIM TO SAY "YES," LOIS.
I DIDN'T. HE HASN'T. THE SCHOOL HAS NO IDEA HE'S HERE. OF COURSE HE DOESN'T KNOW THAT THEY DON'T KNOW...
THAT'S AWFULLY MANIPULATIVE OF YOU.
UMM...
GOOD FOR YOU, DEAR.
KENT MEN NEED A SWIFT KICK IN THE PANTS NOW AND AGAIN.
TINK
WHAT'S THE DEAL, MARTHA? IS IT BECAUSE HE COULDN'T GET A DATE FOR HIS OWN HOMECOMING DANCE?
OH, NO. CLARK HAD A DATE. TWO, ALMOST.
REMEMBER... IT WASN'T UNTIL HE MOVED TO THE BIG CITY THAT HE ASSUMED THAT WHOLE "MILD-MANNERED" PERSONA.
SO WHAT HAPPENED? WHY WON'T HE TELL ME?
BECAUSE IT'S A PAINFUL MEMORY.
THEN I'LL TAKE THE PAIN AWAY.
IF ONLY YOU COULD, DEAR.

HOMECOMING CAME & DANCE NEXT WEEK! CAW-CAW-CAW CROWS!
"IF ONLY YOU COULD..."
HEY, ZABUSKY!
GOT A DATE FOR HOMECOMING?
UH, NO, JUSTIN. WHY?
AWW, TOO BAD. Y'KNOW, THEY SAY THERE'S A LID FOR EVERY POT.
JUST NOT ONE YOUR SIZE!
HAHAHAHAHA!
WHY ARE PEOPLE SUCH JERKS?
IT COMES NATURALLY FOR SOME.
LIKE BREATHING.
DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT.

HEY, SPEAKING OF HOMECOMING...
NOBODY SAID ANYTHING ABOUT -- HMMFF?!
ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO ASK ME, CLARK?
CLARK...?
HMNN?
NEVER MIND...
DUDE, WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM?
UHH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, PETE?
LANA LANG... THE HOTTEST CHICK IN SCHOOL... JUST THREW HERSELF AT YOU, AND YOU TOTALLY BLEW HER OFF!
WHERE'S YOUR BRAIN, MAN?
HOLD IT, BOY SCOUT! YOU'RE NOT THINKING WHAT I THINK YOU'RE THINKING!
OH, MAN! YOU ARE! YOU'RE GONNA ASK MARGE THE BARGE TO HOMECOMING!
RRRRING
I GOTTA GET TO CLASS. I'LL SEE YA, PETE.
IT'S OFFICIAL. THAT BOY DONE LOST HIS MIND...


BIG GAME'S COMIN' UP, SON. Y'ALL GONNA WHUP GRANDVILLE'S BEHIND?
I GUESS...
NOT WITH THAT ATTITUDE, YA SURE AIN'T.
KINDA GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON MY MIND, POP.
WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHUPPIN' GRANDVILLE'S BEHIND?
WELL, SIR, THERE'S THIS GIRL...
LANA LANG?
MARGARET ZABUSKY. SHE AIN'T THE PRETTIEST THING. KINDA HEAVY, TOO. KIDS AT SCHOOL TEASE HER ALL THE TIME. CALL HER "MARGE THE BARGE".
I FEEL SORRY FOR HER. ALL THAT TEASING'S GONNA MAKE HER SNAP SOMEDAY. SOMEONE COULD GET HURT.
SHE GOT A DATE FOR THE DANCE?
NO, MA'AM.
THEN YOU ASK HER. YOU SEE SOMEONE DOIN' SOMEONE ELSE WRONG, THEN YOU SET THINGS RIGHT, CLARK.
THAT'S WHAT A MAN DOES. THAT'S WHAT A HERO DOES.
PA...?
I DUNNO. THAT LANA LANG SURE IS A LOOKER...
JONATHAN KENT!
BUT YOU DO AS YOUR MAMA SAYS, SON.

"CATCHER IN THE RYE", HUH?
I FEEL A LOT LIKE HOLDEN CAUFIELD, TOO, SOMETIMES. LIKE AN ALIEN FROM ANOTHER WORLD...
HI, I'M CLARK KENT.
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
AND YOU'RE MARGE, RIGHT? DO YOU PREFER "MARGARET"?
WHAT DO YOU CARE?
the CATCHER in the RYE
I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW TO ADDRESS YOU WHEN I ASK YOU TO BE MY DATE FOR HOMECOMING.
WHAT?
Y'KNOW. THE DANCE. I'D LIKE YOU TO BE MY DATE.
IS THIS A JOKE?
NOT AT ALL. I'M SERIOUS. IT'LL BE FUN.
LOOK, I DON'T NEED ANYONE'S PITY, OKAY? LEAST OF ALL SOME CORN-FED FARMBOY JOCK.
BESIDES, BY THE TIME THAT STUPID DANCE IS OVER...
...I'LL BE LONG GONE.

A BOY ASKED YOU OUT... CLARK KENT ASKED YOU OUT...
:GIGGLE:
YOU ARE SOME PIECE OF WORK, CLARK KENT!
YOU ASKED MARGE THE BARGE TO THE DANCE AND NOT ME?!
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY GUYS I TURNED DOWN BECAUSE I WAS WAITING FOR YOU?!
I'M GONNA BE THE FIRST HOMECOMING CHAIRPERSON IN SMALLVILLE HIGH HISTORY TO GO STAG TO THE VERY PARTY I PLANNED!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HUMILIATING THAT IS.
NO WORSE THAN BEING CALLED "THE BARGE" ALL THE TIME.
LOOK, LANA. I'M SORRY. BUT THAT GIRL HAS NO FRIENDS.
I'M JUST TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING. TO BE A HERO...
OH, NO...
SLICK MOVE "HERO!"

MARGE! PLEASE! WAIT UP!
I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT!
MARGE!

"THE OLD MILL BRIDGE
"LOTSA FOLKS PUT AN *END* TO THEIR MISERY THERE.
"FOLKS WITH NO *FAITH* IN THEMSELVES
"WITH NO *HOPE* IN THEIR HEARTS
"NO *FUTURE*..."

DON'T DO IT, MARGE! IT'S NOT WORTH THROWING YOUR LIFE AWAY!
CLAAAAARK?!
MARGE!
AA!!!EEEE!
SKAZAK

OH, GOD OH, GOD OH, GOD
EASY, MARGE.
I'VE GOT YOU.
>OOOFF<
FOOMP
KENT, YOU IDIOT! YOU ALMOST GOT ME KILLED!
B-BUT YOU WERE GONNA JUMP?!
JUMP?! WHAT'RE YOU, HIGH?!
BUT WHEN I INVITED YOU TO THE DANCE, YOU SAID YOU'D BE 'LONG GONE'...
BECAUSE I GOT IN EARLY ADMISSIONS TO COLLEGE AND I'VE GOT ORIENTATION THAT SAME WEEKEND!
NOT BECAUSE I'M SUICIDAL!
THEN WHY DID YOU COME HERE...?

TO *THINK.* ABOUT WHERE I'VE BEEN. ABOUT WHERE I'M GOING. LIKE I ALWAYS DO.
I'VE GOT AN *AWESOME* FUTURE WAITING FOR ME. ONCE I LEAVE SMALLVILLE, I WON'T BE LOOKING BACK. BELIEVE ME.
HELL, IT'S A *BRIDGE,* CLARK. CAN YOU THINK OF A BETTER *METAPHOR?*
GOSH, MARGE. I NEVER KNEW...
NO ONE DID. THAT'S 'CUZ THEY NEVER BOTHERED TO FIND OUT.
THEN AGAIN, I NEVER REALLY *LET* THEM. DID I?
NOT REALLY, NO.
SO, ABOUT THAT *INVITATION...*

...GET FUNKY! OWWWW! GET FUNKY!

YOU OKAY?
NEVER BEEN TO A SCHOOL DANCE BEFORE

DON'T WORRY --

-- THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING.

HEY, COOL GUN. LOOKS LIKE YOU AND BRITNEY GOT SOME COMPETITION FOR HOMECOMING KING AND QUEEN THIS YEAR.
YEAH. AS IF.
WE ALWAYS WIN.
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, SWEETCHEEKS...

ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE! LISTEN UP! YOUR HOMECOMING CHAIRPERSON HAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!
TAKE IT AWAY, LANA...
THANKS, COACH ANDREWS.
AS HOMECOMING CHAIRPERSON, IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S HOMECOMING PARADE KING AND QUEEN ARE...
:AHEM:
Justin Masters and Britney Jorgensen
CLARK KENT AND MARGARET ZABUSKY!
WHAT?!
OMIGOD! WE WON?! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
THANK YOU

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HAD SO MUCH FUN
THANKS FOR ALMOST GETTING ME KILLED, CLARK.
ANY TIME, MARGE.
I FIGURE THE LAST MEMORY OF SMALLVILLE YOU TAKE WITH YOU INTO THE WORLD SHOULD BE A GOOD ONE.
WANT ME TO WALK YOU HOME?
NO THANKS. IT'S OUTTA YOUR WAY.
BESIDES--
-- I'VE GOTTA SAY GOODBYE TO AN OLD FRIEND.
JUSTIN, CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT PRISS, LANA? GIVING THE CROWN TO THAT FAT LOSER --
SHUT UP, BRITNEY. GIMME ANOTHER BEER.

HONK HONK HONK
LOOK OUT!
SKREEEECH
MARGE...?

MARGE!
HANG ON, MARGE! I'LL GET YOU TO OL' DOC KELLY! YOU'RE GONNA BE FINE!
I SWEAR! YOU'RE GONNA BE JUST FINE!
TH-THANKS, C-CLARK...
Y-YOU'RE M-MY H-HERO...

BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE ALL THE TIME, CLARK. YOU KNOW THAT.
DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT.
NO. BUT FIVE TO NINE FOR D.U.I. AND INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER BALANCES THE SCALES SOME, DON'TCHA THINK?
NOW WHO THINKS THEY'RE BATMAN?
SHE WAS A GREAT GIRL. PEOPLE SHOULD'VE BEEN NICER TO HER. THEY SHOULD'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW HER.
YOU DID.
YEAH. TOO LATE.
BETTER THAN NOT AT ALL.
KIDS STILL DEAL WITH THOSE SAME FEELINGS OF ALIENATION AND ISOLATION, Y'KNOW. KIDS WITH NO FRIENDS. KIDS WHO NEED HEROES.
YOU REALLY THINK CLARK KENT'S PRESENCE AT SOME SILLY DANCE WILL CHANGE THEIR LIVES?
IT CHANGED MARGARET ZABUSKY'S. EVEN IF IT WAS FOR JUST ONE NIGHT.
SO ABOUT THAT INVITATION...

DAMMIT, KENT! YOUR BOY COMIN' OUT OR NOT?!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, COACH? SUSPENSE KILLIN' YA? KINDA LIKE THAT 4TH QUARTER THIS AFTERNOON, HUH?
OH, LEAVE THE POOR MAN ALONE, JONATHAN LOOK...

The Invitation

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